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THE OBSERVATOR.

A Letter from a Gentleman about the high Price of Bread, and the Care of our Parliament in that Matter. A Letter about the ill Practices of some West *Country Clergy-men, relating to the Briefs for the poor* Palatines. *A Letter from another Gentleman about improving our Woollen and Linnen Manufacture, and imploying the Poor; with the Danger we are in of losing the Manufacture of Sail-Cloth.*

From Wednesday, December 21. to Saturday, December 24. 1709.

Country-m. HEre's a Letter for you, Maſter, complaining grievouſly of the Riſe of Bread, notwithſtanding the Act made this Seſſion of Parliament againſt tranſporting of Corn.

Obſ. One would have thought, *Roger*, that ſince the carrying of our Corn to foreign Markets, is ſtopt, the Price of it ſhould have continu'd low at Home; but there's nothing more uſual, than for ill Men to elude good Laws: Thoſe who have an Inclination to get unjuſt Gain by grinding the Faces of the Poor, have no Regard to the Laws of God or Man. 'Tis my Opinion, *Roger*, but with Submiſſion to the learned in the Law, that by the 19th of 1 *James* 2. the Juſtices of Peace in the Country have a Power to determine the Prices of middling *Engliſh* Corn and Grain by the Oaths, of two or more ſuch ſubſtantial Perſons as are there deſcrib'd; and the Magiſtrates of *London* have the ſame Power within the City. Or if they think that Law not clear enough, they have an Opportunity, now the Parliament is ſitting, to make Application to have the Act explain'd, or a new one made; which, conſidering the great Increaſe of our Poor for want of Employment, and the Likelihood of their increaſing more every Day, ſeems to be very neceſſary. One would think it no hard Matter for the Juſtices, in their reſpective Counties, to make an Eſtimate of the Corn there, and to ſettle the Price accordingly. The lamentable Cries of the Poor deſerve our Compaſſion, and ſeem to require it; but all that you and I can do in ſuch a Caſe, is, to put the Juſtices in Mind of their Duty, which too many of them are apt to neglect.

Country-m. The Gentleman ſeems to hint in his Letter, Maſter, that the Poor in many Places are ſo much ſtreighten'd for want of Bread, as to be ready to break out into Tumults; and therefore preſſes you to take Notice of it, that it may be prevented.

Obſ. I hope, *Roger*, there's no Danger of that; but if they do, the Cure will be as bad as the Diſeaſe, and make them liable to forfeit their Lives, which they would ſeek to maintain by ſuch unlawful Methods. We have thoſe among us, who do all they can to occaſion ſuch Diſorders, for carrying on their factious Deſigns, and would be glad their *French* Supporters had the ſame Cauſe to be encourag'd by Tumults among us, as we have from Tumults among them: But, bleſſed be God, there's a vaſt Diſproportion betwixt our Caſe and theirs; for by all Accounts, there's Corn enough in *Great Britain* to keep Bread at a moderate Price, if thoſe concern'd to put the Laws in Execution, don't neglect their Duty.

Country-m. The Gentleman complains, Maſter, that you take no Notice of Letters he ſent you ſome Time ago, of the Cruelty of a Clergy-man to his own Son and his Family, whom, by a Trick, he has oblig'd to ſurrender all that he had, on Pretence of ſatisfying his Creditors, and now leaves him and his Family to ſtarve.

Obſ. 'Tis impoſſible, *Roger*, for you and I to take Notice of all the particular Caſes ſent us, or to adviſe to a proper Method of Redreſs; but if the Fact be as the Gentleman ſtates it, why does not the Son make Application to his Father's Diocеſan? He ſeems to be the moſt proper Perſon to give that Clergy-man due Correction, and to bring him to a Senſe of his Duty, or to expoſe him for his unnatural Cruelty. Beſides, the Son may have Recourſe to the Juſtices of Peace, and lay his Caſe before them, in order to make his Father perform what he ought to do by the Law; for there's no Reaſon that the Pariſh, or others, ſhould be burden'd by the Children of ſuch Parents as are able to provide for 'em. The Juſtices, by the 43d of *Eliz.* Cap. 2. Sect. 7. may oblige Parents, who are able, to give a competent Allowance to their Children.

Country-m. We muſt ſay ſomething to the Letter ſent us from *Devonſhire*, Maſter; which is thus:

SIR,

'I'VE read many of your *Obſervators* with Satisfaction and Pleaſure; and hope, that your detecting the ſecret and dark Works of ſome, and expoſing the Knavery and Cowardice of others, may be of Uſe to the Publick. This induc'd me to acquaint you with the Practice of ſome Clergy-men in the County of *Devon*, *S. W.* of *Exon*, concerning the Briefs lodg'd in their Hands, and particularly that for the poor *Palatines*, which they publiſh, without making any Collections, either in the Church, or from Houſe to Houſe, as the Brief directs; but lay out ſomewhat of the Poors Stock, or Church-Rate. I ſhall not mention the Injuſtice and Oppreſſion of the Practice in its ſeveral Branches, but leave that Province to you, and only deſire you to take Notice, that in many (if not in all) of thoſe Pariſhes, there are diſſenting Proteſtants who pay to Church and Poor, and therefore are compell'd, by this Practice, to bear their Proportion with their conforming Brethren, tho' they give liberally to the ſame Briefs in the Diſſenting Congregations to which they belong. Your expoſing this Practice, may reclaim ſome, and will oblige others, particularly

Your humble Servant,

Devon, Dec. 14. 1709. *G. W.*

Obſ. I am ſorry, *Roger*, that thoſe, who, by their Function, are oblig'd to give a good Example to others, ſet 'em ſuch bad ones. This proceeds from that Spirit of Bitterneſs which the high-flying Party do ſo induſtriouſly foment, and keep up in the Nation. It may be as juſtly ſaid of them, as 'twas formerly ſaid of the Papiſts in our Office for the 5th of *November*, that their Religion is Rebellion; for we ſee every Day freſh Inſtances of their Diſaffection. The Loyalty they boaſted ſo much of formerly, is an abſolute Stranger among them: ſo that if the Government don't take effectual Meaſures to prevent it, they will never ceaſe till they involve the Nation in Blood and Confuſion, as they did in the Reign of King *Charles* the IIt, or bring us to Popery and Slavery, as they did in that of King *James* the IId. We may juſtly ſay of theſe Men's Re-

Religion, as the late famous Arch-biſhop *Tillotſon* ſaid to one of their chief Writers, when he told his Lordſhip, that the *French* Proteſtants, and others, had better have continu'd in the Church of *Rome*, than reform'd without Biſhops, becauſe ſuch as wanted them, had not the ordinary Means of Salvation; *If the reſt of your Religion be like your Charity, pray God deliver the Nation from it.*

Country-m. I think the Arch-biſhop ſaid very right, Maſter. Theſe Men have given Religion the greateſt Blow that ever it receiv'd from any Men that pretended to be of an eſtabliſh'd Church; for inſtead of countenancing true Piety, and a good Life, they have rais'd ſuch unnatural Heats among us, and ſuch a Spirit of Rancor and Malice, that God knows where it will end.

Country-m. Here's a Letter to you, Maſter, from a Gentleman, about improving our Woollen and Linnen Manufacture, in order to employ our Poor, that grow every Day more numerous and neceſſitous. He complains, that our Wooll is ſtill exported, to the great Damage of our Manufacturers, and the Poor that they us'd to employ.

Obſ. We have very good Laws againſt exporting Wooll, *Roger*, were they duly put in Execution; but there are ſo many corrupt and diſaffected Officers in all Parts of the Kingdom, that 'tis become almoſt a general Complaint; they contribute rather to the Breach, than the Execution of the Law.

Country-m. This Gentleman ſays, Maſter, that we have many thouſand Acres of Land of no Value at preſent, which would bear as good Flax and Hemp, as any in *Europe*; and conſidering the vaſt Quantities of Linnen Cloth and Yarn imported annually into *Britain*, were the ſowing of Flax and Hemp encourag'd, it would ſave that Money to the Nation, and employ our Poor.

Obſ. The Gentleman ſhould lay his Propoſals before the Parliament, *Roger*; for thoſe publick Deſigns can never be effectually promoted, but by the Legiſlature. We have no Reaſon to doubt their Readineſs to do any Thing for employing the Poor, and improving the Country.

Country-m. He ſays, Maſter, that the Poor in *Holland*, *Ruſſia*, and *Germany*, are employ'd in the Linnen Manufacture that we wear; whereas our own Poor might as well be employ'd that Way, and ſave the Money we pay to other Nations for Linnen Cloth of all Sorts, for Bed and Table, Chicks to our Seamen, Tape, Filletting, *&c.* and that he will engage in two Months time to make Children of ſeven Years of Age capable of earning *3 d. per* Day in the Linnen Manufacture, and that in a Years time they might be capable of earning *6 d. per* Day; which would be a great Benefit to the Nation, as well as a Relief to poor People that have many Children to provide for, and know not how to do it.

Obſ. I believe there may be a great deal of Truth in what he ſays, *Roger*. 'Tis pity but ſuch publick ſpirited Men were incorporated in every County, to ſet the Poor at work; for 'tis an old Saying, and true, that what's every Body's Buſineſs, is no Body's.

Country-m. He adds, Maſter, that Children are capable of ſpinning Hemp for Sail-Cloth, which is a Manufacture of the greateſt Conſequence to us, of any Nation in the World, becauſe of the vaſt Quantities we conſume by our Shipping; and in this Manner might our Children be made as uſeful for Defence of the Nation, as our able-body'd Sea-men; and in Caſe of War, we need not run the Risk of having our Sail-Cloth taken or ſtopt as coming from Abroad. He takes Notice of an Act of the 15th of *Car.* 2. for encouraging the Linnen Manufacture, by granting large Priviledges to Foreigners, or others, that will ſet it on foot; and of another in the 7th and 8th of *Will.* 3. with great Priviledges to encourage making of Sail-Cloth, in which the Government employ'd many People; but ſome of 'em having too big a Stock for the reſt, endeavour to ingroſs it all to themſelves, and at every new Contract have lower'd the Price ſo much, that moſt of the reſt muſt leave off; ſo that this uſeful Manufacture will be loſt to the Nation, except the Wiſdom of the Parliament prevent it. He ſays, that about three Years ago, when Flax was ſold for 30 *l. per* Tun, Sail-Cloth was ſold to the Navy for 1 *s.* 7 *d. per* Yard; and now when Flax is 40 *l. per* Tun, 'tis ſold for 1 *s.* 5 *d.* which is 20 *per Cent.* Difference to the Makers; and he ſays 'tis reported, that at next Contract they deſign to lower it a Penny *per* Yard more, to compleat the Ruin of all the reſt, tho' they loſe by it themſelves for the Time, in Hopes to engroſs the whole; and then they will raiſe it to what Rates they pleaſe.

Obſ. Thoſe Ingroſſers and Stock-jobbers, are Caterpillars, that deſtroy the Subſtance of the Nation, to enrich themſelves. The Gentleman ought to lay thoſe Things, and the Proofs of 'em, before the Parliament, in order to prevent ſuch miſchievous Practices; for they may be of dangerous Conſequence to the Government, as well as to the Nation.

Country-m. I'm ſure, Maſter, if I had the Particulars, I would give 'em to my Repreſentatives, to promote a Law for puniſhing ſuch Practices. Here's Thurſday's Votes, Maſter, which give as good an Anſwer as can be deſir'd to the Gentleman's Letter about the high Price of Bread.

Obſ. I am heartily glad of it, *Roger*. May the Bleſſings of thoſe that are ready to periſh, be upon the Heads of our noble Patriots. We need not doubt, *Roger*, but they will make the Law ſo plain and effectual, that Bakers and Meal-men ſhall not be able to raiſe the Price of Bread at Pleaſure, or to leſſen its Weight.

Advertiſements.

Yeſterday was publiſh'd,

☞ The Prieſt turn'd Poet, or the beſt way of anſwering Dr. Sacheverell's Sermon, preach'd at St. Paul's, Nov. 5. 1709, before the right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of London, being his Diſcourſe paraphras'd in Burleſque Rhime. Sold by the Booksellers of London and Weſtminſter. Price 1 d.

Juſt publiſh'd,

☞ Primitiæ Sacræ, the Reflexions of a devout Solitude; conſiſting of Eſſays, Meditations, and Poems, on ſeveral divine Subjects. By John Diſney, Eſq; The ſecond Edition. Sold by B. Bragge in Pater-Noſter-Row.

☞ A New-Year's Gift for young Houſe-keepers, being a Guide to them in the prudent Management of their Affairs, conſiſting of ſeveral Obſervations relating to the diſcreet and orderly Government of private Families, grounded upon Reaſon, Experience, and the Word of God. Sold by B. Bragge in Pater-Noſter-Row.

Juſt publiſh'd,

☞ London's Medicinal-Informer; containing, 1. A brief Enquiry into the ancient State of the Practices of Phyſick and Surgery in the World. 2. The preſent State of thoſe Profeſſions in London. 3. Quacks rightly diſtinguiſh'd from other Practicers, characteris'd, and chaſtiz'd. 4. The Venereal Diſeaſe in its Cauſe, Nature, Signs, dangerous Effects, beſt, moſt cheap, eaſy, ſafe, and private Methods of Cure, truly repreſented, in order to prevent Peoples being ruin'd either by that Diſeaſe, or by unſkilful Pretenders to its Cure. By a London Phyſician. Sold by B. Bragge in Pater-noſter-row. Price 1 s.

Newly publiſh'd,

☞ Merlinus Liberatus. An Almanack for the Year 1710. In which is contain'd Aſtrological Obſervations on the four Quarters of the Year, Judgments upon the Nativities of the French King and the Duke of Anjou. A rational Conjecture at the Time when, and Manner how, the old Tyrant will be diveſted of his Princely Authority, by Death or a worſe Fate. The Eclipſes. A Table of the Conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter, ſince the Beginning of the World, to the Year 1762 inclusive, &c. By J. Patridge, Student in Phyſick and Aſtrology. Printed for the Author, and ſold by B. Harris in Gracechurch-ſtreet, and moſt Bookſellers in Great Britain, and other Wholeſale and Retail Dealers, with the ſame Freedom and Safety as formerly.

☞ A true Account of the late Scotch Invaſion, as it was open'd by my Lord Haverſham in the Houſe of Lords, on Friday the 25th of February, 1708. with ſome Obſervations that were made in the H---ſe of C-----ns, and true Copies of authentick Papers. In a Letter from a Gentleman in South Britain, to his Friend in North Britain. Price 6 d. Sold by B. Bragge in Pater-Noſter-Row.

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